



HAL ZIMMERMAN

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Long-time legislator and Post-Record publisher is now taking a slightly different course in life

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Over the years, the name Hal Zimmerman has been connected with two specific areas: politics and newspapers.

After almost 30 years of being active in Washington politics, Zimmerman decided to hang-up the public life in August 1993 and focus on his new career, spending time with his grandchildren and relaxing.

However, the trail to his involvement with government and active participation in the Camas community began almost 40 years ago when Zimmerman and his wife, Judy, arrived in the small, thriving town.

In 1957, as the couple drove through Camas, they liked the town they saw and its newspaper.

"We liked the town," he said. "We looked at the schools and churches and have been involved with them ever since."

Zimmerman, drawn to the community's newspaper, the Post-Record, first got his start in the news business when he became news editor of the paper in Sedro-Wooley, Wash. Later, he was editor and publisher of the Cowlitz County Advocate in Castle Rock, Wash.

In 1957 he purchased the Camas-Washougal Post-Record and began a new dimension in his life.

"Historically, my involvement in the paper primarily was to improve the whole quality of the news coverage and focus on things in the community," Zimmerman said.

Other community issues the paper was involved in included promoting the Camas-Washougal Port dike area, Lacamas Lake Park development and Interstate-205 bridge, as well as other issues.

During his 23 years as owner of the local paper, Zimmerman said a lot of new equipment was added to the operation and operation space was expanded to meet the need for more room.

It was while running the Post-Record that Zimmerman's interest turned to politics.

He was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives in 1966. He served on several committees including being the assistant whip and later chairman of the Natural Resources and Ecology Committee from 1971 to 1973, when the Shoreline Management Act was passed.

In 1980, Zimmerman was elected to the state senate and sold the Post-Record to Eagle Newspapers Inc., based in Salem, Ore.

He was named chairman of the Local Government Committee in 1981. He resigned from the senate in April 1988, after 22 years in the legislature, and was appointed by Gov. Booth Gardner to serve on the Washington State Pollution Control Hearings Board. He resigned from that position in August 1993.

"Hometown pride on why people decided to live here was focused on. I wanted people in the community to feel that this was their community."

Zimmerman said over the years he owned the Post-Record, he invited community members to take an active role in the types of articles published in the paper.

Zimmerman said one of the most difficult things to occur in the local area was the 1964 Crown Zellerbach mill strike.

"It was a very difficult thing to have happen to the community," Zimmerman said. "The paper tried to focus on how to come back as a community since the strike had divided some neighbors and families."

"I was in the legislature for 22 years and got a lot of great exposure to state and federal issues," Zimmerman said in an interview with the Post-Record in October 1993 about his retirement. "I've enjoyed and am satisfied with everything I've done. There is life after government in terms of my retirement. Now I can be selective and do the things I want to do."

Since speaking those words in October, Zimmerman has found a new realm in which he is active in, being involved with his grandchildren.

"My charge, Brian, 4, is wonderful," Zimmerman said beaming, while Brian was taking his nap one afternoon. "It's a whole new career for me. I'm learning, listening and teaching."

Zimmerman spends two-weeks a month with his grandson during the day. The two of them spend time reading, learning songs, weeding and doing other activities.

"He asks so many questions, especially about words he doesn't understand," Zimmerman said. "It's a great experience

for him and me."

Aside from taking care of his grandson during the day, Zimmerman said he gets to see his other two grandsons, who attend school during the day, when he drops Brian off in the evenings.

"I really enjoy spending time with the three boys," he said. "When our own children were growing up, I didn't have as much time to spend with them as I wanted to. Now with the grandchildren, I have that time."

In the past, Zimmerman has won awards for his work in producing award winning issues at the Post-Record as well as serving as president of the Camas-Washougal Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce and the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association.

Currently Zimmerman is working on the Boy Scout drive in the local area and leading a discussion group at the Camas Methodist Church.

"I'm avoiding major commitments right now," Zimmerman said. "I want to enjoy some of my free time."

During the years, Zimmerman has spent some of his free time with Judy traveling the world. The couple has ventured to Japan, the former USSR, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, South America and several places in between.

Since being in the area for so long, Zimmerman said he has seen many changes in the community. Some of the challenges Zimmerman foresees in the future for the area include providing "top-notch" education; having adequate industrial land; protecting individual freedoms; and being aware of the needs within the community.

"We're in a time of transition," Zimmerman said. "We must combine the nostalgia of the past into the excitement of tomorrow by planning and anticipating the possibilities for this community."